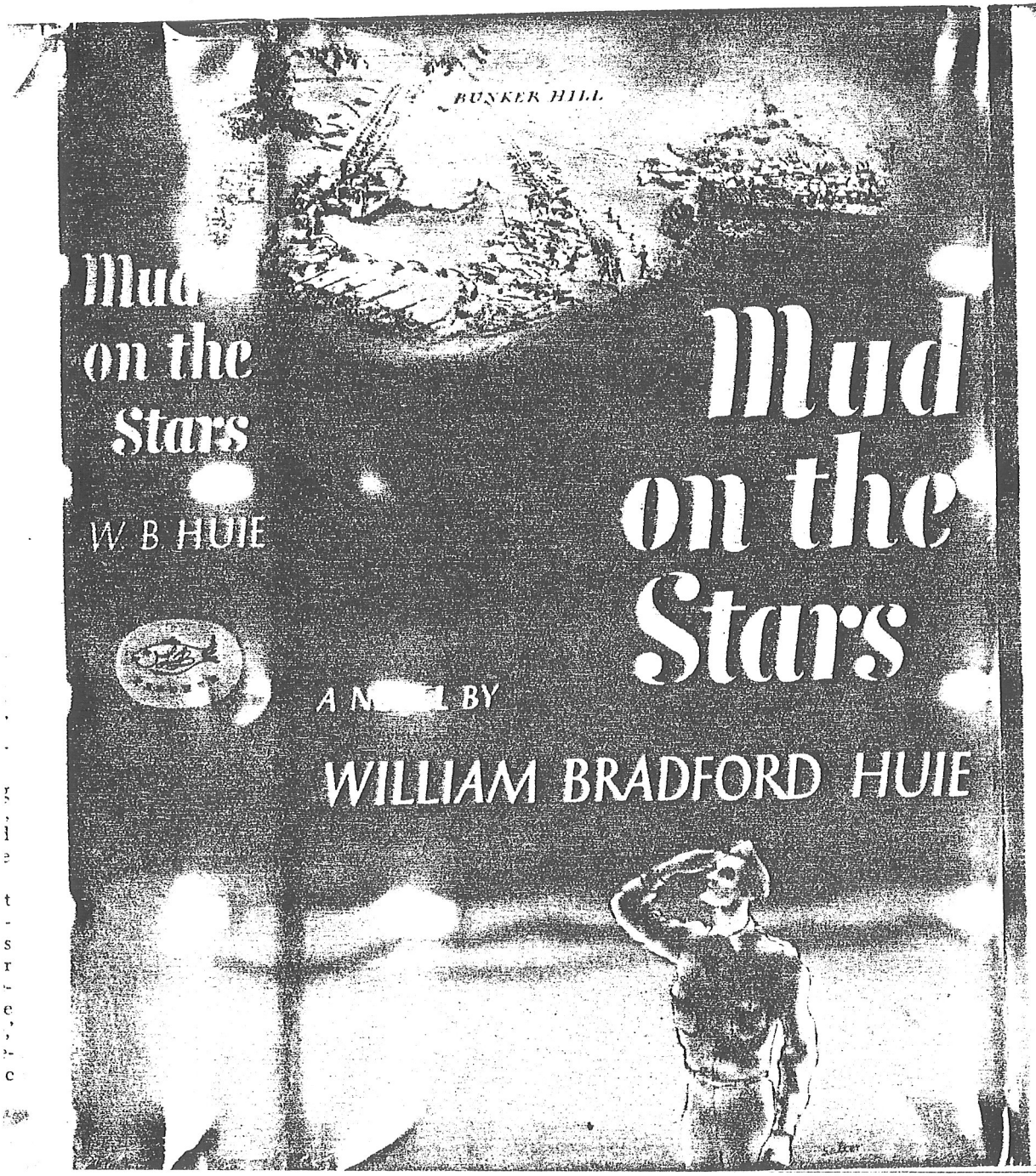

$2.75

Mud on the Stars

A NOVEL

by WILLIAM BRADFORD HUIE

Here is a remarkable first novel—one which will be widely discussed—an honest story, frightening at times; but a reader cannot fail to be moved by its sincerity and its disturbing presentation of reality—the clash of forces making for civil dissension in America. The author is a thirty-year-old newspaperman and Associate Editor of *The American Mercury*.

MUD ON THE STARS is the story of an American soldier of World War II. As Private Peter Garth Lafavor is celebrating New Year's Eve, 1941, in a Louisiana honkytonk, he looks back beyond Pearl Harbor into his past to account for his present and that of his companions. Ready to go out to meet the enemies of his country, perhaps to die, he reflects on his long bitterness and cynicism, and wonders why it took so final a challenge to make the values of American life clear to him.

Before his enlistment, Private Peter Garth Lafavor saw what had appeared to be an immutable world crumble about him. He stepped out of school and into—the depression. His growing pains were all the sharper because they coincided with the growing pains of his country. Everything was challenged—old fears, standard values, accepted concepts.

There had been a new definition of freedom for Lafavor and his generation. But freedom and license had been

strangely combined with restriction and centralization. When a TVA project covered his birth place under water, Lafavor felt that other traditions too had drowned under the onrush of new forces. Accepted beliefs, deep-rooted customs vanished overnight. Like others of his countrymen he hit out blindly, part of the struggle of opposing forces in America; the clash of labor and capital; the struggle of individualists against communists; the battle between native fascists and the forces of democracy; the tug-of-war of citizens against corrupt politicians and political playboys—all the forces that bred cynicism and low morale.

Magazines have devoted much attention to the "morale problem" in military and civil life, to say nothing of private discussions on that subject. Mr. Huie's novel is a valuable contribution—its report on one man's experiences in the midst of the battle for faith and integrity is a revelation not to be discounted in this chaotic time when our country is fighting not only for its life but for its soul.

MUD ON THE STARS is a rough, tough and thoughtful book, shot through with poetry and tragedy, high hope, despair and bitterness; it is unusual and provocative. You will either like it, or dislike it, intensely. We can guarantee that your reaction will not be lukewarm.

L. B. FISCHER PUBL. CORP.

WILLIAM BRADFORD HUIE

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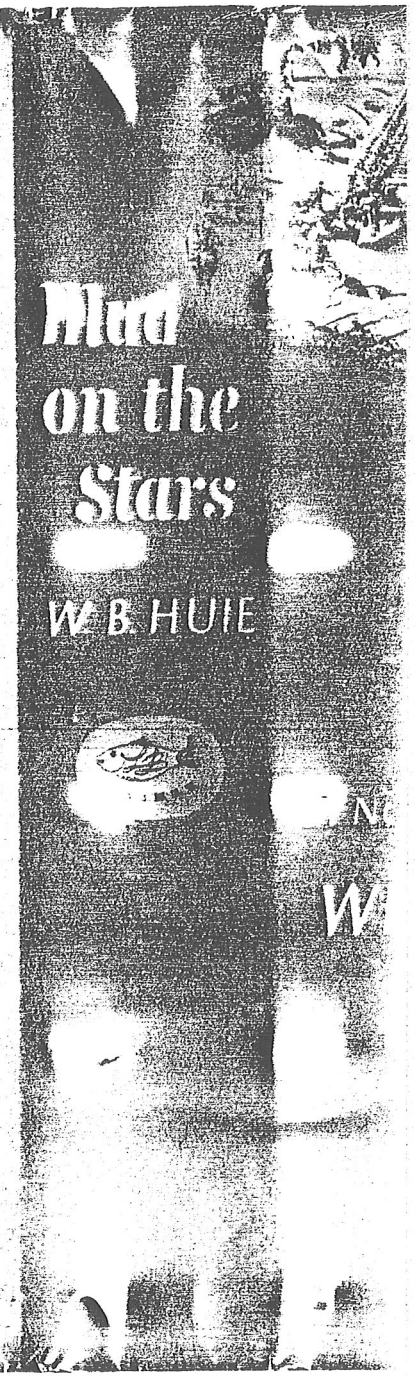
is well equipped to write both of the problems of the New South and of the problems of the "Roosevelt Generation" of Americans. Born in the Tennessee Valley of old French and Scots-Irish stock, he spent his youth "hanging around lumber mills and gin yards" with the people "who speak the language of Shakespeare and who commune each morning at sunup with God and Nature." He went to the University of Alabama where he was graduated with honors and a Phi Beta Kappa key.

From 1933 to 1938 he was a newspaperman in Birmingham, covering "politics, rape trials and labor war." In 1936 he "turned fascist" in Alabama and spent two years "hating Roosevelt's guts" and trying to throw the "communists" out. During this period he was editor of a magazine, secretary of the Rotary Club of Birmingham, and promoter of "sundry enterprises designed to make Alabama safe for Jeffersonian Democracy." With his younger brother, he founded two successful weekly newspapers and a commercial printing business.

In 1939 he went to California and spent nearly two years "doing nothing but traveling around, warming bar stools, sleeping in the sun, arguing with everybody I met, trying to figure out what-the-hell, and selling an occasional piece to some editor." In 1941 he returned to the Tennessee Valley and wrote *Mud on the Stars*.

He describes himself as "a natural-born bar-stooler who'll talk all night to anybody who can tell a good story and who doesn't suffer from indigestion." Thirty years old, Mr. Huie now lives in New York where he is associate editor of *The American Mercury* and a contributor to other magazines. He says he shares "the ambition of every Southern Gentleman," which is to "lick Hitler, then wring enough money out of the Damnyankees so he can return to the Tennessee River, 'restore Tara,' and then spend the rest of his life lying under a tree, drinking homemade whiskey, and thinking about what damn fools the materialistic Yankees are."

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